

Volume 19, No. 05 • January 13, 2012

# Nation

## State of the Nation Grand Chief Coon Come

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*the Nation*

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## Balancing the risks

By Will Nicholls

We long ago became accustomed to the environmental review reports issued by those who wish to exploit the land. Usually we are told there will be few problems if any, no real impacts and that the materials to be left behind are already naturally present in the environment anyway. So why worry?

We are told that the reports are backed up by apparently solid evidence from respected scientists. The truth is that when you have two sides (whether equal or not) you can find someone considered an expert to promote whatever you want regardless of its credibility. Just look at the warped debate over climate change. The scientist just chooses the data that works for their employer and people who don't understand the science can be bamboozled, or at the very least, infected with a tiny virus of doubt.

First of all, you have to understand that the data we are supplied, whether it is from the proponent or opponent, can be reliably counted on to buttress the respective positions of either side. Chemicals or elements are everywhere and there are no inherently safe or dangerous chemicals or elements. It is how they are used or released into the environment that determines whether they are dangerous or harmless.

Whether or not a chemical or element is already present in nature or is a byproduct of resource exploitation (such as mining, forestry or hydro-electric dams) has no real meaning. The presence of the chemicals doesn't relate to risk. It is the amount that matters. The amount can be small but still have detrimental effects out of proportion to what has been released and the opposite is also true. And yes, there will be an impact on the environment.

You can never totally eliminate potential risks. In each instance potential risks have to be measured against potential benefits. Any chemical or element that is introduced into an environment will cause harm of some sort and to think that it won't is foolish and naïve. Environmental assessments are about relative safety not absolute safety.

It does not mean we should not have any development projects but that we should thoroughly examine, understand and evaluate each one accordingly. Risk assessments these days are clearer and better understood than in the past and greener solutions are more available and easier to implement. But one maxim stands out and is truer than ever: if it sounds too good to be true it usually is!

It is impossible to know all the repercussions of introducing more of a specific chemical or element into the environment. Crees know Hydro-Quebec said the mercury problem would only last 30 years or so and still it shows little sign of slowing down. Old mine tailings in the Ouje-Bougoumou region continue to pose a threat even as newer projects are seriously considered.

We can't accept the messages bombarding the Crees and other Northern residents at face value. The potential impacts demonstrated by the scientific evaluation of data cannot be erased by having more people deny or spin the truth more frequently.

Some agreements for the Cree, such as the Trolius Mines Agreement, have proven benefits. Others may prove to be only as beneficial as the smoke and mirrors used to hide unacceptable risks that the Cree of Eeyou Istchee will have to endure for generations. We all need to understand the true risks of resource extraction proposals in order to evaluate whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

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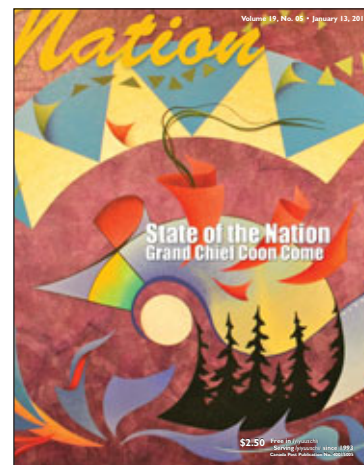


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## A cure for all seasons

By Sonny Orr



One nice thing about winter is that it signals the beginning of the flu and cold season, which, if left alone to develop, can turn your schedule upside down. Hacking out one's lungs in the middle of an intense snowstorm with flash cold temperatures in the minus 40s should do the trick. However, despite all the hullabaloo of recent flu scares – SARS, H1N1, H2N2 – this season seems to be a little light on dire warnings from the authorities.

Nonetheless, it's still the season of flu shots and, for some, an intense reaction to those immunity boosters that can leave one with a sore arm and a curious itch. I say, to heck with all those expensive band aids. Let's take a look at mother nature and see how she delivers her antidotes to life in general.

One of my favourites is the beaver. Now, how the heck does that animal do it, swimming all year long, under the ice in winter. Sure, the beaver does have fur and fat and evolution on its side, but doesn't it ever catch a cold or flu? Let's take the scientific approach to all of this and analyze the not so obvious. For example, what does it eat? It eats a lot of bark from willows and other fine snacking conifers and softwoods. In fact, this may be the most obvious answer to the overall question: the willow bark is the cure.

It seems that this fact, well known to us First Peoples, that chewing on the inner bark or even on a scraped twig is the miraculous cure for many of life's ailments. And it's been in everyone's backyard all along. This didn't go un-noticed, because if my memory doesn't fail me, Hitler and his Nazi minions were after

the holy grail of miraculous cures so their storm troopers could last a little longer on the battlefield and eventually take over the world. Being mainly a pain reliever and not a life reviver, however, the poor little bark eventually took on the form of aspirin. Jokingly prescribed among the medicine crowds, taking two a day will keep the doctor at bay.

Aside from intense cabin fever, the other thing that horrifies nearly everyone is the deadly skin rash. Once, way back when I had hair and didn't need glasses, an old lady dropped by to check up on her mail. She didn't know how to read, so my mother would translate the letters and write back. It just so happens that little sister had her usual skin rash, and the old lady noticed. The next day, she showed up with a cure: yes, more tree stuff. This time, it was rotten, dried-out cedar wood that she had crumbled to a fine dust. This was used after a bath and just like baby talcum, used to dry out the skin. Et voila, the rash disappeared.

So, if you are wondering the next time you chop down a sapling or towering fir tree, think about how many cures there are in this single piece of live wood. From the roots to the needles, to the dying remains lying on the forest floor, the tree does have its way when it comes to helping mankind fight its way along the time line of our existence in this place we like to call this earth. Remember, we are slowly ridding the earth of the answers to our well being by clear cutting the cures to what ails us. I say, save a tree, eat a beaver.

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# Nemaska council critic resigns in protest

## Roger Orr denounces double dipping and crony contracts

news

By Jesse Staniforth

Roger Orr's term as a member of the Nemaska Band Council was short. Elected in April of 2011, Orr resigned November 16, saying he could no longer participate in a council that he feels does not properly serve the people of his community.

Orr has several complaints about the band council. Foremost among them is his allegation that council members are double-dipping by taking money from the community for their work on the council without taking leave from their day jobs.

Band council members earn an honorarium of \$1,000 per month (the Deputy Chief gets \$1,500 per month, while the Chief draws a salary). Additionally, council members are paid a \$250 per diem for days spent in council meetings. That per diem increases to \$350 if the council sits later than 5 pm.

"The per diem is to compensate you for your salary loss," said Orr. "You're supposed to take a leave of absence from your job when you go into the meeting."

Orr says he has no problem with council members being paid for their

"That's double-dipping," Orr said. "And the conflict of interest is when the councillors voted for themselves that they should keep that [per diem]."

Chief Matthew Wapachee sees it otherwise. He points out that the situation depends on whether or not a council member is an employee of the Cree Nation of Nemaska. Some outside employers dock the salaries of council members for days missed during sessions. The band itself does not, however, leaving it instead to the discretion of council members who are also employed by the band to decide whether they will accept the per diem for the day.

"It's always been like that," claimed Chief Wapachee. "Whenever a council meeting was called, [employees of the Cree Nation of Nemaska] were never penalized for taking the time to participate. They get a per diem for the day, but they don't need to take it if they don't want to take it. If a certain member of the council did not feel comfortable with accepting that per diem, it was at his discretion to refuse and not pursue it at all."

**"THAT'S OUR CHILDREN'S MONEY, AND THE PEOPLE'S MONEY. WE SHOULD JUST BE HONOURED TO BE VOTED IN – TO BE ABLE SIT AND DISCUSS WHAT'S BEST FOR THE COMMUNITY. "**

work on the council. However, he claims that all members of the Nemaska band council (with the exception of his wife, Deputy Chief Linda Orr) continue to draw salary on days they spent in council and for which they were compensated by the band. If council members are still receiving pay from their jobs, he says, they should not accept money from the community for their council work.

Roger Orr, however, thinks that it is wrong for councillors to draw two simultaneous streams of pay from the band.

"That's our children's money, and the people's money," he said. "We should just be honoured to be voted in – to be able sit and discuss what's best for the community. What they were receiving was a great honour to have."



They should just stay like that and take a leave from their jobs."

Equally controversial, however, is Orr's contention that Andrew Coonishish, brother-in-law to both Chief Matthew Wapachee and Director of Operations (D.O.) George Wapachee, has been receiving sewer and water construction contracts from the band that were not submitted for public tender, while the band's Maintenance Department has been shut out of work that Orr says it could have done more cheaply.

Orr points to a recently built four-plex of homes that was expected to be connected to community sewer and water services by Nemaska's Public Maintenance crew.

"It was given to the local maintenance to hook up those houses, so they'd ordered the materials and equipment," Orr observed. "But the next thing you know, while everyone was gone, [Andrew Coonishish] went in there and started digging. He hooked up the four-plex without anybody else's directive, except the D.O.'s. And yet the D.O. was given a directive by the housing administrator and also the Deputy Chief to get Municipal Maintenance to do it."

"I'M LETTING THIS INFORMATION OUT BECAUSE THE PEOPLE HAVE TO KNOW, SO THAT PEOPLE WILL REALIZE THAT THEY CAN SPEAK UP. THEY HAVE A VOICE. THEY'RE ABOVE THE CHIEF, AND THE CHIEF IS BELOW THE PEOPLE. THEY CAN SIT IN COUNCIL MEETINGS – THEY CAN WALK IN AT ANY TIME AND SIT DOWN AND LISTEN. THEY CAN GET THE MINUTES AND ASK FOR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS. **IT'S ALL ABOUT TRANSPARENCY. THIS IS WHAT I'M PRACTICING. THE PEOPLE DESERVE TO KNOW.**"

Municipal Services foreman Sam Cheezo is also frustrated with Coonishish's apparently privileged access to contract work in Nemaska.

"I have my staff that are certified to work on water lines, but they never let them do the work," Cheezo said. "The contracts go directly to Mr. Coonishish. We have the machinery. We purchased [that machinery] to cut down the cost of the work for the community of Nemaska. We can't do anything, because of close relations between Mr. Coonishish and the Chief and the Director. They won't listen to me."

Worse, Orr and Cheezo agree that the quality of work executed by Mr. Coonishish is poor.

"I don't know if he's certified to lay down pipes," Cheezo said. "He's taking shortcuts and causing problems. We're the ones who are handling the problems after each time he works. It's like we're following him to fix up his mess. We have to redo everything. It cost us \$100,000."

And besides, when he does contracts, he never provides blueprints. I don't even know if he has them."

Cheezo points out that a contractor must provide a blueprint in order to receive the 10 per cent of his pay on a job that's held back, but Orr counters that the Band Council of Nemaska does not hold any pay back from Mr. Coonishish.

"There were no written contracts," added Roger Orr, "and normally there's a 10 per cent holdback, but with Mr. Coonishish there were none."

Chief Wapachee says that he has little control over the issues related to Coonishish's work in Nemaska.

"Again, this is the way that business has been done," said Chief Wapachee. "I've been absent for four years. I'm just back from retirement. That's the way that decisions have been made during my absence, before I came in."

Though he is Coonishish's brother-in-law, Chief Wapachee says he does not deal with him on any matter related to these contracts. All contracts with Coonishish are undertaken by Director of Operations George Wapachee. Chief Wapachee doesn't see these close relations as grounds for suspicion.

"I'm probably related to half the community here," he said. "Everybody else is related to somebody, one way or the other. It's a small community."

Roger Orr is not convinced. He says that he attempted to change both situations in council by vocally opposing the per diems for employees of the band, and also by suggesting the implementation of a Construction Committee that would make it easier to discuss issues like those surrounding Coonishish's work. On both subjects, he says, the council was hostile to change. Faced with the inflexibility of the council, Orr saw no other option but to resign in protest.

Still, Orr insists that he doesn't hold a grudge toward anyone.

"I'm not doing this out of anger," he insisted. "I'm letting this information out because the people have to know, so that people will realize that they can speak up. They have a voice. They're above the chief, and the chief is below the people. They can sit in council meetings – they can walk in at any time and sit down and listen. They can get the minutes and ask for financial statements. It's all about transparency. This is what I'm practicing. The people deserve to know."



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# Better late than never?

## RCMP partners with the AFN to fight violence against native women

by Irkar Beljaars

news

The RCMP says it will develop closer working relationships with First Nations groups in a joint effort to solve cold case files on the epidemic of missing and murdered native women in Canada.

The RCMP will establish a working database of missing persons and unidentified remains in partnership with the Sisters in Spirit database, once the negotiations are completed with the Native Woman's Association of Canada.

Supt. Brenda Butterworth-Carr, the RCMP's Director General of National Aboriginal Policing and Crime Prevention Services said the force is creating a national work plan with the cooperation of the Assembly of First Nations, and though it is not the task force that many native women's groups have called for, the work plan is a start.

When Harper allocated \$10 million to the cause of missing and murdered women most of it went to the RCMP for their missing persons and unidentified remains database. Butterworth-Carr made it clear that there would be a strong emphasis on missing Native women within this database.

"It is our biggest priority that we at the RCMP deal with the violence Native women deal with every day," she said. The mandate is to work with native women's groups across the country. The goal is to build communication with concerned groups, and to use the media to raise awareness of the crimes committed against Native women.

There are other projects across Canada looking into the issue of missing and murdered native women, including a joint task force in Manitoba between the RCMP and the Winnipeg police service called Project DEVOTE, which investigates old homicides and missing person cases. There is the E-Pana task force in BC which has a task force of dedicated officers who are going over cases found on the highway of tears between Prince Rupert and Prince George, as well as investigations in central and northern BC. Others include Project Kare, a joint task force between the RCMP and the



Supt. Brenda Butterworth-Carr

Edmonton Police which deals with high-risk cases, and Project Even Handed, which is investigating the 60-plus cases from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

When Shannon Alexander, 17, and Maisy Odjick, 16, went missing near Maniwaki, Quebec, on September 6, 2008, it went almost unnoticed. It was a week before the mainstream media picked up the story and reported that the two teens were missing. There was no Amber alert or a massive search with hundreds of volunteers. The community and family members did not see the usual media stakeouts or police task force created to deal with the disappearances.

Violence against native women is still a reality in Canada, as is the general public apathy concerning the issue. Families and Aboriginal women's groups hope this collaboration will grow into a force that will make a difference for Canada's Native women and the sisters who fell victim to as yet unknown predators

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# Let's get WinterActive!



**WinterActive** takes place throughout Eeyou Istchee. Look for fun activities in your community starting January 21 to March 24 .

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## Liberals blast feds over Attawapiskat crisis

The federal Liberal Party continued its harsh criticism of the Harper government's handling of the Attawapiskat housing crisis after a December 18 visit to the community by Liberal Leader Bob Rae and the party's critic for Aboriginal Affairs, Carolyn Bennett.

"At the moment, we're grateful that the 22 homes have been dispatched," Bennett said of the modular homes that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs ordered for the community in mid-December.

However, the Liberal Party maintained its opposition to the feds' decision to impose third-party management on the community and to force the band to pay the management fee out of its own funds.

"We think third-party management was inappropriately applied, without any warning and without any understanding of what was going on," Bennett said. "This is a band that has been co-managed for numbers of years, where Canada has been part and parcel of every decision. Their books are up and online. We think that this was just an attempt to change the channel and assign the blame when the real blame goes to the Government of Canada."

Additionally, the Liberal Party considers third-party management a

band-aid solution to the problem of Northern poverty.

"We believe that lurching from crisis to crisis is no way to manage ongoing situations," Bennett insisted. "Attawapiskat is probably only one of 100 bands with these types of living conditions."

## First Cree of 2012

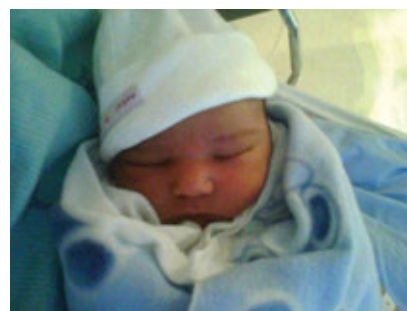
While most were out celebrating the arrival of the New Year, Edith Salt and Rylan Gull-Chum of Waswanipi were celebrating the birth of their second son, Cohen Gull-Chum, the first Cree baby born in 2012.

Delivered at 12:29 am on New Year's Day and weighing a healthy 3.8 kilograms, Cohen Gull-Chum became the newest member of the Waswanipi First Nation. Edith Salt gave birth at the Hospital in Chibougamou where everything went well as both mother and child are healthy. Carlyle Gull-Chum has a new baby brother to start the year, making 2012 a year to be remembered.

Congratulations to the family on their new arrival and for winning the race to 2012.

## Kateri Tekakwitha sainted

Born in 1656 in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon near Auriesville, New York, Kateri Tekakwitha was named as one of the seven new saints to be canonized by Pope Benedict XVI next October. Kateri was the daughter of Kenneronkwa, a



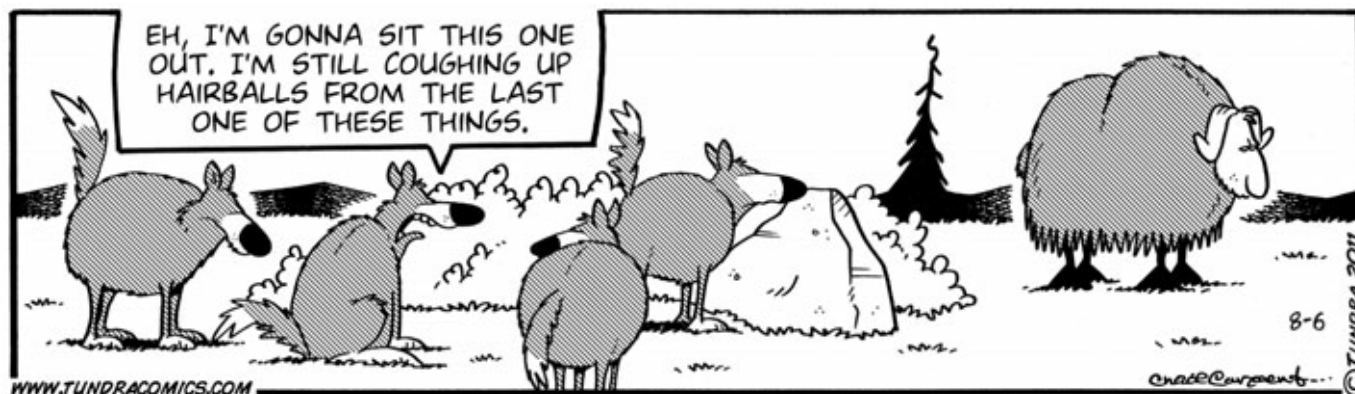
Cohen Jackie born January 1st 12:29am 2012. 8lbs 6oz to Edith Salt and Rylan Gull-Chum

Mohawk chief, and Tagaskouita, a Roman Catholic Algonquian.

At the age of four, smallpox swept through Ossernenon, rendering her an orphan with a scarred face and poor eyesight. Baptized at the age of 20, she fled persecution and landed in Kahnawake, Quebec. There, she dedicated her life to prayer and caring for the sick and elderly, but died soon after at the age of 24. Several miraculous events have been said to have occurred through her intercession. The first Aboriginal to be sainted, she is also remembered as The Lily of the Mohawks. Her grave stone reads, "The fairest flower that ever bloomed among red men."

**Correction:** Issue Vol. 19 No. 3, December 16th 2011 in the article "Crazy about the children" on p. 13, the name of one of the main organizers and member of The Headstart Program is Ethel Taylor and not Ethel Blackned as reported.

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: [www.tundracomics.com](http://www.tundracomics.com)



# Eeyou Istchee in the midst of historic evolution

## The State of the Cree Nation Address with Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come

by Amy German

Looking back on another prosperous year of economic development in the Cree Nation, Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come recently took the time to discuss with the Nation what the government he leads has done for Crees.

While Premier Charest's ambitious Plan Nord put Eeyou Istchee on the global map as a hub for natural resource development, the Crees were simultaneously able to negotiate a Framework Agreement that will eventually see control of Category II and III lands returned to the Crees.

Though the Nation-to-Nation Final Agreement between the Crees and Québec on Governance on the Territory (the "Final Agreement") is still months away from completion, Coon Come seems very proud of the negotiation progress thus far as this process will remedy so much of the damage that was done by Bill 40 back in 2001. That's when the Quebec government unilaterally amended the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement to give significant control over much of the territory to the Municipalité de la Baie James.

Coon Come talks about the creation of the Cree Development Corporation to help manage the many new economic opportunities for Crees under the Plan Nord, as well as the Cree Mining Policy that is helping ensure Cree rights are respected in the new mining boom.

And the Grand Chief comments on other achievements, from the long-overdue formal recognition of Ouje-Bougoumou as a full-fledged Cree community, to changes within Cree governance, the growth of the Cree trust fund and the creation of new justice facilities.

Looked at on an individual basis, these successes may show that the Crees of Eeyou Istchee are doing very well. The Crees under Coon Come are a force to be reckoned with.

***The Nation: This was a significant year for the Crees, what was the most significant accomplishment of the GCC/CRA in 2011?***

**Matthew Coon Come:** The issue that we have made as one of our key priorities, and one which will have the most far-reaching and long-lasting impacts on our communities and the Cree Nation as a whole, must be our governance negotiations with Quebec.

When I came into office I made a commitment that I would work to undo the effects of Bill 40, which transferred significant powers to the non-Native municipalities in the region over Category II and III lands. There was a clear attempt in that legislation to relegate the influence of our com-

munities, and our Cree Nation Government, to Category I lands – mere postage stamps in relation to the size of our traditional territory. This was not right, and I said so.

I said so to Premier Charest, and to his credit, he understood what I was saying. When I first discussed this matter with him he invited us to present him with a solution to the governance issues in the North, which was, as he put it, "outside the box."

So that is what we did. We put forward a proposal that will see all the significant powers related to the planning and management of lands and resources within our Category II lands exercised by Crees. With respect to Category III lands, we proposed a regional "Northern Government"

together with our non-aboriginal neighbouring municipalities, which would also have significant powers over the planning and management of lands and resources. The body that would form this "Northern Government" would initially be constituted on a parity basis between the Cree Nation and the representatives of the municipalities of Chibougamau, Chapais, Matagami and Lebel-sur-Quévillon. After an initial 10-year period, this representation would be reviewed based on demographic realities and democratic principles.

In May 2011, I signed a Framework Agreement with Mr. Charest based on these ideas, and we are now negotiating a Final Agreement, which we expect will be concluded in May 2012.



I have commended Mr. Charest on his visionary leadership in moving forward with this groundbreaking initiative. If we are successful, not only will we be righting a wrong when Quebec passed Bill 40, but we will go a very long way in demonstrating in very tangible terms what it means for Quebec to be inclusive of aboriginal peoples in the fabric of its society. When this is concluded I am certain that we will have a model, which will be important not only for Quebec, but also for Canada and the world.

I have full confidence in my negotiating team led by Abel Bosum and Bill Namagoose to guide these negotiations to a successful conclusion.

***What was the most disappointing part, issue, action or event of the past year?***

To be honest with you, I do not dwell upon disappointing events or issues. Leadership is about having a vision and steering the Nation in a direction that is in keeping with this vision. So far, there has been nothing major which has forced us to deviate from the vision I had when I assumed the office of Grand Chief. We are making major strides in the area of governance; we are positioning the Cree Nation and our communities to take full advantage of the Plan Nord so that we can provide the economic opportunities that we will need for the future generations.

In support of these initiatives we have taken steps to implement a much-needed economic development vehicle for the Nation – the Cree Development Corporation –, which we are anticipating, will play a very key role in facilitating our involvement in the economic development of the territory. We have, through our Cree Mining Policy, ensured that mining companies respect Cree rights in the territory through the negotiation of several pre-development agreements and one major Impact Benefit Agreement.

We have just seen final passage of the Eeyou Marine Agreement by the Government of Canada, which

acknowledges our rights with respect to the offshore islands. We have also ensured the implementation of several important measures to improve the quality of life in our communities, including the opening of Justice buildings in Chisasibi, Mistissini and Oujé-Bougoumou, as well as the establishment of the Eeyou Istchee Police Force. And finally, after many years of negotiations, we have signed Complementary Agreement No. 22, which incorporates Oujé-Bougoumou into the JBNQA as a full and equal Cree First Nation.

So, we have stayed the course, we have held firm to our vision, and we are continuing to move forward. I do, however, sometimes feel disappointed at having to come out of my hunting territory to attend emergency meetings.

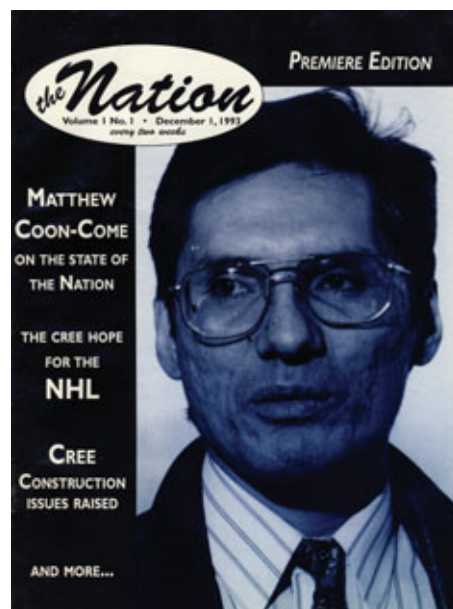
***How have the negotiations for the New Framework Agreement progressed since we last spoke about them seven months ago?***

The Framework Agreement, which we signed, last May called for the completion of a Final Agreement by May of 2012. Our Cree team has been meeting regularly with the Quebec side to address all the issues that need to be

*"I SAID SO TO PREMIER CHAREST, AND TO HIS CREDIT, HE UNDERSTOOD WHAT I WAS SAYING."*

resolved so that the agreed-upon deadline can be met. Everything is on track. Several sub-tables have been established including a Legal Sub-Table, a Finance Sub-Table and a Regional Government Sub-Table. Mr. Charest has appointed Mr. Daniel Gagnier as the chief Quebec negotiator on this file, and Quebec has appointed an individual, Mr. Florent Gagné, to work with the mayors of the non-Native municipalities to obtain their input into, and to clarify, a number of issues related to the future regional government.

A schedule of intensive negotiating sessions has been established for both



the sub-tables and the main table to complete the work they need to do. I am told that Mr. Gagnier has stated at the main table that Mr. Charest has indicated to him that, "Failure is not an option." I agree with him. The stakes are too high for all sides.

***What kind of an impact do you think it has had in Eeyou Istchee?***

As our discussions related to the negotiations of a new governance regime in the territory have progressed I have kept both the Grand Council/CRA

Board of Directors and the Cree Nation as a whole informed and updated. Both the intent and the specific contents of what we have been negotiating have been very well received.

For me, these negotiations represent the next step in the development of our Cree Nation. When I share my vision with our Cree people and when I explain that this issue represents a critical milestone in our assuming greater control over our traditional territory and laying the basis for our being able to ensure benefits for our communities from the development of

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All the best for 2012



# Agenda 2012



the resources in our territory, people nod. When Cree people nod, they both understand and express agreement. I am very pleased and encouraged by the reaction thus far. I feel that we are all on the same wavelength on this issue and we all recognize that this is the next essential step in the building of the Cree Nation. I will continue to keep the Cree Nation informed as this very important issue progresses over the coming winter and spring.

***How did you feel about Oujé-Bougoumou finally becoming an independent Cree community?***

The Oujé-Bougoumou people have gone through very difficult trials and tribulations and have worked incredibly hard to finally become incorporated into the JBNQA as a full and equal Cree First Nation. I consider it my personal honour and privilege to have been able to be part of the achievement they recently celebrated. The community is now on firm legal footing and the entire Cree Nation is strengthened as a result of their efforts. I feel blessed to have been a part of their journey.

Their incorporation into the JBNQA represents the culmination of a long effort to redress an injustice and to finally make right the circumstances that the community of Oujé-Bougoumou should never have experienced. We all worked together – the Crees, Quebec and Canada – to do the right thing.

Oujé-Bougoumou's own creativity and innovativeness, which it showed in



On behalf of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, I congratulate Oujé-Bougoumou for its perseverance and its determination to arrive at this most historic occasion, and for its steadfast adherence to the dreams and visions of their Elders.

***What kinds of changes have been made in the last year within the GCC/CRA to make it more efficient and more accessible to Crees?***

Ever since the signing of our New Relationship Agreement with Canada, the Cree Regional Authority has assumed responsibility for a wide range of services and programs that had previously been the responsibility of Canada. In order to exercise these new responsibilities we have needed

Agreement and that we will be able to demonstrate that we have been able to exercise these new powers in a responsible way. The way we measure this is in the success we show in addressing the needs of the communities. At the end of the period of time during which the New Relationship Agreement is in effect, we will need to renegotiate that agreement. We will need to demonstrate that we have effectively provided the necessary programs and services to the communities. It is in the long-term interest of the Cree Nation to ensure that we have been successful in doing this, and this is what we are in fact doing.

***In recent years there has been trouble with the Cree Trust losing value as a result of the economic downturn in the US and the stock market. Was 2011 a better year for the Cree financial outlook?***

In 2008-2009, as you know, there was an economic and financial crisis which was global in scope. No investment fund around the world, whether it was a pension fund, a trust fund or a heritage fund, escaped the negative impacts of that crisis on the value of their portfolios. The Cree Trust fund was no different. The value of our

“WE WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EXERCISE THESE NEW POWERS IN A RESPONSIBLE WAY.”

the planning and construction of its village, will also be an example to us of what can be accomplished when we take off the blinders and allow ourselves to be open to new ways of thinking and new ways of solving problems.

to expand the CRA. A considerable number of new positions have been created to respond effectively to the needs of the Cree communities. This trend will continue until we are confident that we can fulfil our obligations under the New Relationship

funds experienced some erosion. Over the subsequent years, although the performance of funds has been more volatile, the financial markets have generally experienced a steady recovery. This has been true of the Cree Trust funds as well. The major

for what we refer to as a “Pre-Development Agreement,” which addresses situations when a company wishes to undertake extensive exploration activities. Included in these PDAs, as we call them, are requirements for local employment, contract-

In combination, these agreements hold out very substantial opportunities for increased employment, contracting, and other benefits for our Cree people as the pace of mining activities within Eeyou Istchee increases. Projects such as the Eleonore Project within the Wemindji traditional territory, Stornoway within the Mistissini territory and BlackRock Metals within the Oujé-Bougoumou territory are just some of the examples of the activities that will be taking place within Eeyou Istchee and from which we will be able to ensure benefits for our communities.

We are also actively working to realize the opportunities for the Cree Nation to become involved in the production of energy by taking advantage

**“OUR CREE TRUST FUND IS NOT IMMUNE FROM WHAT IS HAPPENING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND WE WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE GENERAL STATE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.”**

portion of our losses incurred in 2008-2009 has been recovered.

It is important to highlight, however, that the global economy is currently experiencing new challenges and difficulties as a number of European countries grapple with very serious financial issues. The future is not at all clear as to how widespread the impacts of the difficulties of certain European countries will spread. There is the possibility that they could spread to North America as well. If that is the case, our Cree Trust fund could experience new challenges. Our Cree Trust fund is not immune from what is happening throughout the world and we will be affected by the general state of the global economy.

What I can assure the people of Eeyou Istchee is that we continue to seek out the best possible financial advice available, and we will take whatever measures we can to protect the value of our Cree Trust funds so that it will be able to address the objectives we have established for it.

***Tell us of the economic development opportunities that the GCC has been involved in over the past year (mining, energy, etc)?***

As you know, it was relatively recently that the Cree Nation adopted the Cree Mining Policy. This policy lays out both the guiding principles and the specific procedures that any mining company wishing to carry out exploration work or wishing to bring a mining operation into production must follow. The Cree Mining Policy provides

ing, addressing environmental concerns, addressing the concerns of our hunters and trappers, and addressing issues related to important cultural sites within our territory. To date, we



have entered into several negotiations to conclude PDAs.

Our Cree Mining Policy also calls for negotiations of Impact Benefits Agreements for those companies wanting to bring a mine into production. These agreements go into considerably more detail with respect to a wide range of benefits for the Cree communities potentially affected by such mining activities. The agreement with Goldcorp with respect to the Eleonore Project is an example of such an agreement.

of the potential for wind, small hydro and biomass energy within our territory. We are working with the Cree First Nations in identifying the economic and employment opportunities associated with these projects.

As the Plan Nord continues to be elaborated, and as the role of the Cree Nation with respect to the Plan Nord becomes clearly defined, the opportunities for our communities will increase significantly.



**Looking forward, what are the major goals for you as Grand Chief for 2012?**

As I mentioned earlier, we set out a course of action based on a distinct vision for the development of the Cree Nation. We are in nation-building mode right now. We will do all we can to stay on that course and to achieve important gains that will contribute to the enhancement of the scope of powers, jurisdictions and authority of the Cree Nation within our traditional territory.

**"WE ARE ALSO ACTIVELY WORKING TO REALIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CREE NATION TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF ENERGY."**

I am confident that we will arrive at a Final Agreement on Governance in the coming months that will strengthen our authority with respect to Category II lands, and which, together

with our non-Native neighbouring municipalities, will extend our influence over Category III lands.

We will continue to ensure that substantial benefits from the Plan Nord will come to our Cree communities so that we can address the economic, employment and social needs of our people. We will also continue to identify the key areas that will ensure that our people are prepared to accept the challenge of becoming the major economic, political and social force within Eeyou Istchee. This will

require an emphasis on education, training and human resource development in anticipation of the kinds of employment that will become available. Our involvement in establishing

the Cree Job Partnership Strategy is an example of the kinds of initiatives we will be putting into place to accomplish this objective. There is much work to be done and we will continue to do what is necessary to fully take advantage of the historic opportunities before us.

**Is there anything you would like to add?**

As this interview is taking place in December 2011, I would like to take the opportunity to extend my best wishes to the entire population of Eeyou Istchee and James Bay for a very happy holiday and a joyous New Year. May we all take the time to rejuvenate our energies, find deep contentment in being with our families, and commit ourselves to finding ways to contribute to the building of the Cree Nation as well as building the partnerships with our neighbours in the region and elsewhere that will result in a better future for all of us. Meegwetch.



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## Run Romeo, run

### The historic gamble of the first Native federal leadership candidate

By Daniel David

Romeo Saganash has a bronchial infection. His breathing is laboured; his voice is almost a croak. His face is framed by a wave of longish curly hair. The clothes are expensive, stylish and businessman dark. He's been fighting an chest infection for a week or so, made worse by a short campaign trip to the west coast and then a quick flight back to Montreal to take part in the NDP's televised leadership debate.

"I was afraid my voice wasn't there," he says about his debate performance. "But I got through okay."

Saganash is one of eight people vying to replace Jack Layton and lead the federal New Democratic Party, the Official Opposition in the House of Commons. And he's raising eyebrows. In fact, there were more than a few pundits in both the English and French media who gave Saganash unexpectedly high marks. Why unexpected? Because Saganash isn't like the other candidates.

Saganash is a newcomer to the NDP. He didn't earn his stripes working up the ranks of the party, or work on anyone's

election campaign. This lack of political bones may be a factor against Romeo even if it was the late Jack Layton who personally recruited him to run as the party's candidate in the riding of Abitibi-Baie James-Nunavik-Eeyou.

Then there's the fact that he's a northerner, representing a huge but sparsely populated northern riding. Finally, Saganash is Cree, and the first Aboriginal person to ever run for the leadership of any national political party in Canada.

Yet, the overall assessment of Saganash's performance paralleled his own about his vocal performance. "My voice got stronger as we got going, especially in the French debates." Pundits said he "started late" but improved as the debates went on in both languages. Saganash says it was his first time in the glare of national audiences and it took awhile for him to get up to speed.

A lot of people expected Saganash to do well in the French debates. After Thomas Mulcair, Saganash is the most fluent candidate in French. Despite the

"mutual admiration society" as one pundit described both the English and French debates, commentators said Saganash won points on issues like the environment, resource development and Native issues. Saganash had better do well on these files since he's worked on them for most of his professional life.

Romeo Saganash was born in Waswanipi, "survived" 10 years in residential school and returned home to a choice; pursue the life of his father and ancestors, or take another path.

"Well, if my father had been there when I got out, I would've gone to the bush and lived that way of life. He died the first year I went to residential school. That killed my hopes of becoming like him, living like him, and pursuing that traditional way of life."

Saganash spent two years in the bush, but it was a panel discussion in 1985 looking back at the first 10 years of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement that changed the direction of his life. There were speakers on this panel from Hydro Québec, officials of



the federal and Québec governments, but also James O'Reilly, a Montreal lawyer who represented the Cree during the JBNQA negotiations.

"I sat there listening to them," Romeo says today. "I listened to James O'Reilly. And I thought to myself: 'I can do that!'"

The following year, 1986, Saganash enrolled in law at the Université du Québec à Montréal. He graduated in 1989.

Almost immediately, the Grand Council of the Cree recruited Saganash to set up a Quebec City office to work on Cree Government and International Relations. This work would focus on two increasingly vital issues that threatened to undermine the JBQNA. Quebec's plans to build more hydro dams on northern rivers would also literally pave the way for mining companies to begin operations across Cree territory. The federal government, on the other hand, seemed content to ignore its commitments to the Cree while hoping that no one of political consequence noticed.

Complaints about the federal government's negligence snowballed as years passed over the cost of building roads, homes, and new schools. And so it went.

The Cree said many of the problems were due to Ottawa's failure to keep its end of the bargain. In almost every case, these problems also infected the Cree relationship with Quebec. In short, Quebec didn't want to be caught holding the bag for anything Ottawa did or didn't do.

Caught in the middle, Cree agencies launched lawsuits to pressure both levels of government to make good on their parts of the Agreement, or have the courts settle the matter for them. By the time the 25th anniversary of the signing of the JBQNA rolled by, Cree lawsuits against both the federal and Quebec governments totalled about \$6 billion.

Saganash says breaking this legal logjam became his priority. He visited every Cree community to explain why they needed to break the deadlock. It was costing the Cree a fortune in legal bills each year just to keep the lawsuits alive. Saganash and others felt the time was ripe to negotiate a new deal to cre-

ate jobs and jumpstart stalled development. This eventually produced the Paix des Braves.

The 1990s had garnered international notice for the Crees' headline-grabbing activism. Cree paddlers on the Hudson River generated global opposition to Hydro Québec's plans to dam the Great Whale River system.

As the only indigenous group from Canada recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental group, the Cree helped open doors at global forums so other Aboriginal peoples from Canada and elsewhere could also raise their concerns. Eventually, these efforts developed into a 20-year effort to define a "Draft Declaration" on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Then Jack called.

"The first time he asked me was in 2006," Saganash recalled. "I was a guest speaker at an NDP Quebec convention in Saint Jérôme. I was to speak on Aboriginal rights in Canada. Jack happened to be there. After my presenta-

des Braves. He says Jack called every now and then over the next four years.

"There wasn't any pressure. He just wanted to know how things were. Or he'd ask about something dealing with Aboriginal issues."

In February 2011, however, "He called up. This time, I told him: 'Jack, I think I'm ready this time.' He immediately asked, 'What are you doing tomorrow?' I had meetings set for the next morning but I flew down to Toronto the next afternoon. I went to Jack's house and we sat at that kitchen table, that same kitchen table where everyone sat with Jack to plan the next election campaign."

The rest is history. On May 2, the NDP swept aside Quebec's long dominant Bloc Québécois in a mass political shift dubbed the "Orange Crush." Saganash won in a riding nearly three times the size of France but with less population than a medium-sized city, where the best-ever result for the NDP had been a second-place score of 28 per



tion we chatted for a while. He said, 'Would you consider running for my party?'"

Saganash said he wasn't ready at that time. His children were still in school, negotiations at the UN on a Draft Declaration were at a critical stage, and the Cree had him working on the Paix

cent in 1988. The federal riding of Abitibi-Baie James-Nunavik-Eeyou stretches from near Val d'Or in the south to Nunavik in the north, and includes Inuit, Cree, Algonquin, Attikamekw, Innu, territories and populations.

The riding is also the focus of Jean Charest's multi-decade Plan Nord, a

grand blueprint for a resource extraction and industrial development boom.

In politics, timing is crucial. In the federal election, voters in Quebec were ready for a change. The world is in a global financial meltdown that Canada cannot escape. Uncertainty about jobs, an aging Quebec workforce nearing retirement, worries about cuts to social, health and education programs are ingredients in a recipe for political change. Voters are receptive to messages of hope instead of the grim conservative fear mongering of uncertainty and pain. All of which raises questions about the timing of Saganash's decision to run for the leadership of the NDP.

Robert Kanatewat is from Chisasibi and a long-time fixture in Cree politics. He became an activist in the 1970s campaigns against Robert Bourassa's plans to divert and build hydroelectric dams on rivers flowing into James Bay. He's never stopped his involvement in Cree affairs. At the Special Chiefs Assembly of the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa, he said he wasn't sure why Romeo Saganash chose this time to launch a leadership bid.

"I think he's brave to run for the leadership of the NDP," Kanatewat says. "Especially since he's only been an MP for less than a year." If Saganash actually overcomes the long odds to win the NDP leadership, it will take him away from his constituents, Kanatewat warns.

"I wonder if he's been to every part of his riding," questions Kanatewat. "I don't know if he's been to Nunavik, or if he's been back to the Cree communities, or if people in the rest of his own riding know very much about him."

To Russell Diabo, it's more than just a case of poor timing; it's about harsh reality and numbers. Diabo, a Mohawk from Kahnawake, is a disenchanted former Liberal who once worked in the trenches to establish an Aboriginal caucus. He quit, frustrated by the internal Liberal Party machinery, mostly an old-boys network, which had little understanding or sympathy for Indigenous rights let alone a real role for an Aboriginal caucus within the party structure.

"My understanding is that the NDP have a one vote per party member sys-

tem, unlike the Liberals who had a delegate selection process," Diabo observes. "But most of the NDP membership is in the West, not in Quebec. As we know, there was only one MP from Quebec before this last election. It's hard to say if the NDP can maintain that support into the next election.

"As for Romeo's leadership race, I think he's way at the back of the pack although it's nice to see him up there. I think he has some things to say. Certainly

tics isn't our system and they don't want to participate in a 'foreign' system."

Regardless, Saganash said he's the only candidate of the eight people running for the leadership who has crossed the country looking for support. He insists that he's running a mainstream campaign with one difference from the others – he includes Aboriginal communities.

"There has not been one single community that has not said we cannot sup-



in the Quebec and Aboriginal experience, he has something to say that the rest of Canada could learn from if they wanted to listen."

But to Diabo, it still all boils down to numbers.

"When we were in the Liberal Party, we identified 16 ridings where Aboriginal peoples held the balance of voting power. But we don't have a history of participating in the mainstream vote. As you know, we didn't have the vote until 1960, 1968 in Quebec. And a lot of people feel that mainstream poli-

port you. I met with an Ontario delegation recently and I'm positive from the reaction I got from them. I'm going to meet with another Ontario group (of chiefs) at the AFN Assembly. I've been getting expressions of support and I think that will continue."

But did any Aboriginal group promise to officially endorse his leadership? Or to deliver votes for his leadership by signing people up as members of the NDP? More to the point, has the Grand Council of the Cree officially endorsed



Romeo Saganash's leadership aspirations with the NDP?

The answer to all of these questions (so far): No, they haven't. Not officially. Some people may act as individuals, may join the NDP so they can vote for Romeo. But it's unlikely, according to

our own election process to elect our own government at the local and national level. And that's our government."

However, Madahbee adds, he'd be happy to see the Anishnabek newspaper run an article, campaign material or anything else to make sure that people are

"SAGANASH INSISTS THAT HE'S RUNNING A MAINSTREAM CAMPAIGN WITH ONE DIFFERENCE FROM THE OTHERS – HE INCLUDES ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES."

Russell Diabo, that any official Aboriginal group will publically endorse Romeo Saganash.

Patrick Madahbee, Grand Council Chief of the Anishinabek Nation, is more blunt. "Officially we have rules within our organization. We have to work with all these parties. Obviously, we have friends in some parties and enemies too. So we have to work with all of them. Our official position is that we can't endorse other governments. We are our own Anishnabek Government. We have

aware of Saganash, someone he met only a couple of weeks ago and considers "a very intelligent man."

Ghislain Picard is Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador. He says there should be a debate within communities to decide for themselves to get more involved in mainstream politics.

"If you ask the chiefs though," Picard nods his head toward the conference hall where the Assembly of First Nations was meeting, "the discussion can only go



so far. To me, the fact that so many of our people have become more involved, especially in this last election in the mainstream political parties and process, especially within the NDP, a lot of people are saying that maybe it's time we sent our best warriors."

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# Images of the future

## New video shows the way for Eeyou development

By Shaun Malley

It's said that a picture is worth a thousand words. If that's true, a new five-minute video could be that epic novel that captures the rising spirit of an entire nation.

The Cree Regional Economic Enterprise Company – CREECO Inc. for short – recently released a video that puts a face to their corporate name. Though many had some idea of what CREECO Inc. does, the company wanted to leave no doubt in people's minds.

CREECO Inc. communications officer Jonathan Saganash is the driving force behind this branding campaign. For him, it is a matter of connecting economic and social development with pride in Cree potential.

"We want to let people know that CREECO Inc. is a one-stop shop for development," he said. "It's owned and operated by the Cree peoples. We also want young people to see us as the employer of choice [in Eeyou Istchee] once they finish their studies."

If you take a look around the major business developments in the North, chances are you'll come across a CREECO Inc. project. As a Cree-owned

Construction and Development Company has over 35 years of experience in the business. In fact, the company built the Chisasibi school that's featured in the video.

"People can see themselves in [the video]," said Saganash. "The branding of CREECO Inc. is not just a strategy for people outside of Cree lands, it's also there for us in the community."

This video was a long and complex undertaking. Saganash, who has previous experience in civil engineering and information technology, spent a year observing the CREECO Inc. family after being hired as the company's first communications officer. Hundreds of hours of footage were shot while criss-crossing hundreds of kilometres of Eeyou territory. Simply co-ordinating schedules for interviews proved to be a nightmare. Nor did it come cheap, though Saganash feels it was worth the price.

"When I presented the cost, I was not the most popular guy in the room," he recalls with a laugh. "But afterwards when people saw it, they would call me saying how much they loved it. People even ask for DVDs to take home to their families."

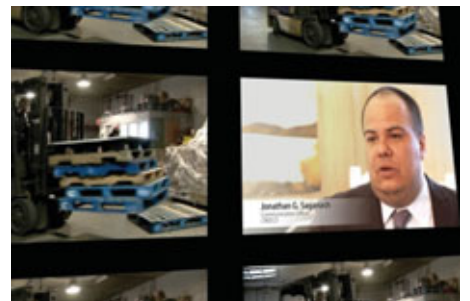
**"IT'S ABOUT TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE, TO BETTER THE POSSIBILITIES FOR DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES. WE'RE MAKING MONEY BUT WE GIVE BACK."**

holding company, it is deeply involved in building the future of the people and the land in many different domains.

The familiar orange-and-black logo of Air Creebec is joined by its many sister companies in the fast-paced, special effects-heavy video. Though the airline is one of CREECO Inc.'s more high-profile entities, others get their time in the spotlight as well. Do you need support staff for a 2,000-person mining camp? Gestion ADC can take care of that for you. Does your community need a new school? Cree

Corporate videos usually inspire yawns; this production inspired pride. The premiere screening at a Cree economic event in Val d'Or generated a thunderous reception. Its impact was almost instantaneous. A 30-second version of the ad has garnered interest in CREECO Inc. from First Nations across Canada.

"We place ourselves as a national model," said Saganash. "It's about transferring knowledge, to better the possibilities for different communities. We're making money but we give back."



# Cree Hockey News and Notes

Story and pictures by Daniel Coyle



Silas Neeposh of Kahnawake Condors

## Kapuskasing Flyers Bring Their Winning Ways to Gatineau

The AAA Kapuskasing Flyers of the Great North Midget League finished 2011 on a high note, putting together a combined record of 8-1-1 in both GNML games and games played at the Waterloo Golden Puck Tournament, recently held in Waterloo, Ontario.

There are a number of Cree boys on the Flyers roster, including Tanner Cheechoo, Braden Etherington, Cameron Etherington, Brennan Nesrallah and Sheehan Moore. Braden Etherington and Brennan Nesrallah are key components of the Flyers offense with Nesrallah currently sitting second on the team and fifth overall in the league scoring race with 20 goals while Etherington is currently second on the club in points per game; averaging close to 1.5.

The Flyers begin 2012 at the Kiwanis Midget Tournament in

Gatineau, Quebec. This year marks the 47th edition of the Kiwanis tourney, which brings together Midget AA and Midget AAA teams from across Canada and around the world. This year, the Kapuskasing Flyers are one of 40 entries in the tourney. Games are played at three arenas in the Gatineau area, with all final games taking place at Robert Guertin Arena, home of the QMJHL Gatineau Olympiques.

The Kiwanis Midget Tourney is also an important date on the calendars of hockey scouts from teams in the QMJHL, OHL and WHL. They will be assessing the young talent in advance of the junior leagues' drafts later this spring.

At the end of the Kiwanis Midget tourney, the Flyers will head back to Northern Ontario where they go on the road for three GNML games, including two games versus the Sault Ste. Marie North Stars and one game against the Sudbury Nickel Capital

Wolves, before returning home to face the Kirkland Lake Legion 87s on January 21.

At the time of writing, the Flyers were riding a five-game winning streak, placing them in second place in the GNML, three points back of Sudbury.

## Online Resources for Cree Hockey Nuts

In recent months, a number of online resources have been developed to provide Cree hockey fans with news and background on Cree hockey players at every level of the game – from kids playing minor hockey, up to junior and university, and all the way up to the minor and major pro leagues.

If you are on Facebook, do a search on "Cree Hockey Players." Cree hockey fans from a variety of regions across Canada administer the page, including



Joshua Bosum, Jason Coonishish (Administrator of the Quebec Section), Patrick Buffalo, Greg W. Desjarlais and Waskaganish Recreation Director Charles J. Hester. The Cree Hockey Players page now has 3,600 followers and provides links to stories, photos and newsbites on Cree hockey at every level in Canada, the US and Europe.

Another site that focuses exclusively on First Nations hockey is NativeHockeyNews.com. Based in Manitoba and written and edited by Philip Paul-Martin, NativeHockeyNews.com offers features, interviews and news stories focused on exclusively on First Nations teams and players. In addition to a section dedicated to the NHL's Winnipeg Jets, NativeHockeyNews.com includes sections focused on native players in major junior hockey, university and college hockey, pro Hockey and the NHL. The site is also developing audio and video content focused on native hockey, as well as a regularly updated Twitter feed that offers content for all hockey fans.

### Coming Soon to a Radio Near You – Hockey Night in Cree

The Wawatay Radio Network (WRN) recently announced they will begin broadcasting NHL games in the Cree language. WRN, which is based in Timmins Ontario, aired the first of seven games on Saturday, January 7, when the Detroit Red Wings visited the Air Canada Centre to face their Original Six rivals the Toronto Maple Leafs. While the complete broadcast schedule has not yet been released, WRN has announced the final broadcast of the season will be April 7, when the Leafs visit Montreal to face the Canadiens; a game that may be critical to the Leafs' playoff chances this season.

A recent report by WRN indicates that the games will be called by veteran broadcasters George Nakogee and Jules Spence. According to its website, Wawatay Radio Network provides radio programming in the Aboriginal languages of Northern Ontario: Ojibway, Oji-Cree, and Cree. WRN



Deverick Ottereyes of PEI Rocket

also provides an English version of its news broadcast to that portion of the Aboriginal population who do not speak their ancestral languages.

While the Wawatay Radio Network can be found on your radio dial at 89.9 FM in Sioux Lookout and 106.7 FM in Timmins, listeners can also tune in to games online. For more info on how to catch your next hockey game in the Cree language, visit [wawataynews.ca/radio](http://wawataynews.ca/radio).

### Silas Neeposh named Top Rookie Defenceman

Kahnawake Condors' received an early Christmas gift when he was named Rookie Defensive Player of the Week in the Quebec Junior AAA Hockey League. Neeposh, an 18-year-old from Mistissini, is in his first season with Kahnawake where he was proven to be a minute-munching defenceman who brings some offensive punch both to the Condors' power play and 5-on-5 play.

During the week of December 18, the young defenceman scored 3 goals in 2 games, including two power play markers, while adding a rating of +2. Neeposh began his award-winning week by scoring two goals in the Condors' 10-2 victory

against the Vaudreuil-Dorion Mustangs. Two days later he again lit the lamp in Kahnawake's 5-2 over Lachine. So far this season, Neeposh ranks 12th in scoring on the Condors, third among defensemen, with a record of 4 goals, 7 assists and 11 points in 29 games. Neeposh beat his teammate, goaltender Maxime Belanger, to take home the top defensive award.

The two wins were big for Kahnawake as they struggle to secure a playoff spot. The team currently sits in 10th place, five games under .500 with only 14 games remaining in the regular season. They face Longueuil January 13 and Princeville two days later.

### Alex Cooper Heads West to Join the OCN Blizzard

In player news, as reported last month in the Nation, Waswanipi's Alex Cooper has joined the OCN Blizzard of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. The Blizzard acquired the Hockey Canada playing rights of the 19-year-old forward from the Blind River Beavers of the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League, in exchange for future considerations. The 5' 11",

181-pound Cooper had 1 goal and 10 penalty minutes in 7 games with the Beavers this season. For his junior career, Cooper has put up 29 points and 68 penalty minutes in 49 NOJHL games with Temiscaming, North Bay, and Blind River, as well as 13 points in 14 games with the SIJHL's Fort William North Stars. During his AAA midget career, Cooper helped the Sudbury Nickel Capital Wolves capture the 2008 Telus Cup National Championship. That 2008 season saw Cooper record 20 goals and 20 assists for 40 points in just 30 games. Cooper has also represented Eastern Door & North in the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship.

### Struggling Forestiers Begin 2012 in the Montreal Area

The Midget AAA Amos Forestiers begin 2012 in the middle of the pack, sporting a recording of 12-11-3-5, good enough for 10th place in the 15-team Quebec Midget AAA Hockey

League. The club, which includes Alex Hester of Waskaganish, has struggled to string together more than a pair of wins, compiling a 6-7-2 record in games played since the beginning of November, during which time they failed to string together more than two wins in a row.

Les Forestiers will be at home in Amos for back-to-back games versus Gatineau January 14 and 15. The Forestiers have a win and a loss against Gatineau this season.

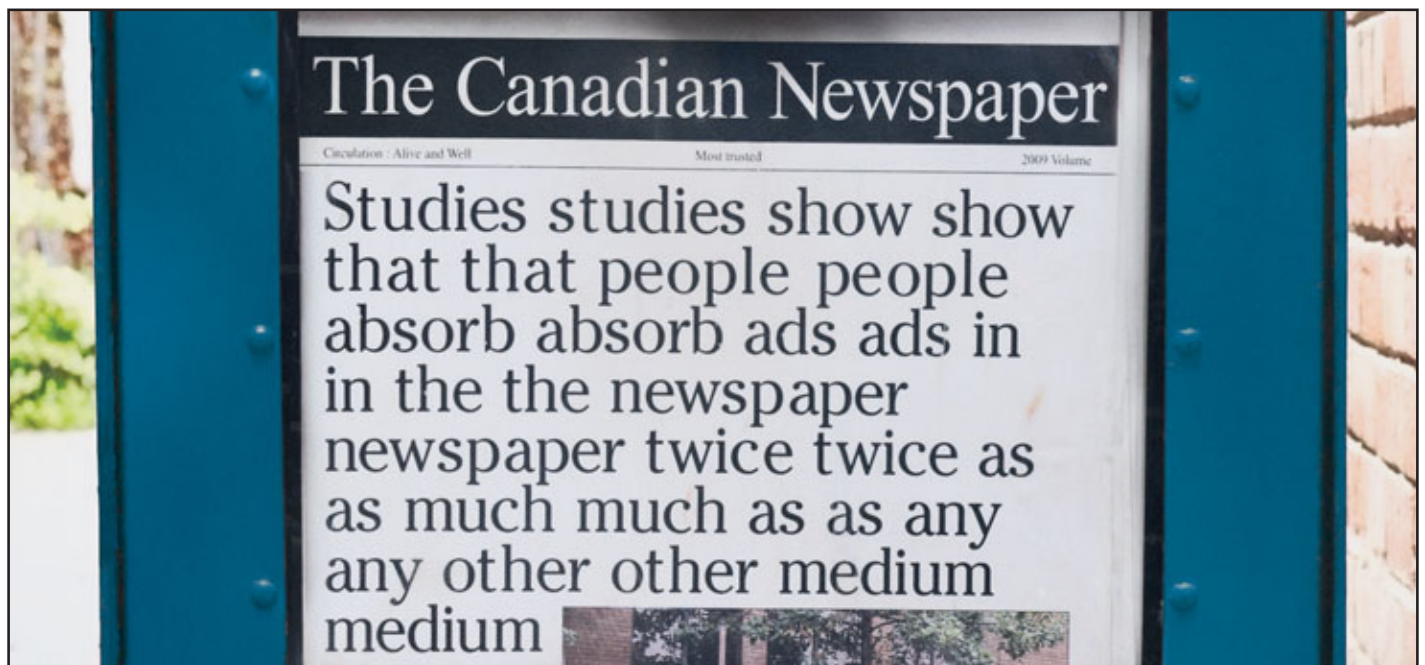
### Hockey Homecoming for PEI Rocket's Deverick Ottereyes

Rumour has it that a homecoming of sorts is planned for late February when the PEI Rocket visit the Val d'Or Foreurs for a QMJHL matchup at the Air Creebec Centre. The game will represent the first time that Waswanipi's Deverick Ottereyes will take to the ice in Val d'Or in a QMJHL uniform. Talk around the CREE Senior Hockey Tournament in December suggested that a busload or three of hock-

ey fans from Waswanipi and other communities might converge on Val d'Or that weekend to cheer for Ottereyes.

As a rookie with the Rocket, Ottereyes has been used largely in a defensive role, playing third line minutes as well as being used on the penalty kill by Rocket coach Gordie Dwyer. In 26 games this season, Ottereyes has tallied two assists with a -5 rating and 12 PIM on a Rocket team that is in a rebuilding mode. He recently sat out a couple games after being hit in the side of the head by a puck during warm-up prior to a recent game with the Quebec Remparts. However, as of December 30, Ottereyes was back in the Rocket lineup.

The Foreurs have struggled with attendance at home games this season, so that there should be plenty of room in the stands for Cree Hockey fans making the trip to cheer on the their hometown boy.



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# Serving up success in a four-course menu

By Michael Lewis

*Who offers a four-course menu, including an entree, soup, main course and dessert for \$5? Pass by the Sabtuan Regional Vocational Training Centre in Waswanipi, where you can eat to your wallet's content.*

"We are not out to make money," Centre Director Michael Lewis says from the get-go. In the final stages of the Professional Cooking Course, his students must perform in a "real" setting. The Centre has created a 48-place Learning Restaurant.

This community service showcases the talent of future graduates and can encourage other Cree adults to come develop their skills and take gastronomic ideas back home.



Can you visualize success?



Presentation is important

## Top-notch ingredients

Chef Jocelyn Myre, a member of the Federation of Chefs, uses his knowledge from a bachelor degree in Hotel Management to prepare his students diligently to meet the needs of hotels, hospitals, and catering services.

"He transmits passion," said Redfern Matawashish of his gastronomy coach. "There is no way to fall asleep in the kitchen, smelling the dish and watching your hard work come to fruition. At the beginning it took us a whole afternoon to bake one pie but now we can produce 50."

The 1,470-hour training culminates in a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS), which could lead to a career as a head chef. The students

learn more than slicing and dicing. They have been sautéing, braising and blanching.

There are all kinds who attend. Some in the program had to learn how to peel a carrot at the beginning, says Chef Myre. The aim is to get students to experiment with texture and taste and develop their palate. Some have a



A feast for the eyes and nourishing, too

natural ability to be creative and understand recipes.

Their skills include preparing succulent dishes in mouth-watering sauces. The client's palate is teased and pleased and their appreciative applause is absolute proof. Creamy soups tickle the taste receptors and awaken unknown sensations in the brain.

## The icing on the cake

After Christmas they will enter the examination stage in which they choose the menu, order the food, develop a work plan, and organize the kitchen staff to successfully produce their culinary vision for the dinner. Don't miss the next opportunities to dine here.

Apprenticeships at a variety of eateries will begin soon, with some apprentice chefs travelling to Mississini, Wemindjii, Chibougamau, Oujé-Bougoumou and Val d'Or, where they will offer their hard-earned culinary expertise to the hungry masses.

Are you interested in becoming a chef? Check out the next issue of the Nation, the Education issue, where you will find out more on Sabtuan Vocational Training classes to come.



Delicious recipe for success



## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMUNICATIONS/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The Niskamoon Corporation is presently seeking a dynamic and resourceful individual with strong organizational/communication skills to develop, maintain, and implement communication and promotion strategies and information programs. You will publicize activities and events as well as update and maintain Niskamoon Corporation's website and other approved social media solutions.

Your professionalism and strong interpersonal relations facilitate the coordination and monitoring of administrative procedures in the implementation of policies and procedures with Niskamoon's partners in the areas of the Technical Employment with Hydro-Quebec Program (TEHQ Program). Moreover, you enjoy organizing and coordinating activities such recruitment campaigns, reviewing high school based project submissions, promoting TEHQ Program information as well as managing the Niskamoon Summer Student Employment Program for students in accordance with Niskamoon Corporation's Program Policies and Procedures.

### YOUR ROLE

You will manage, coordinate and maintain the Niskamoon Corporation Website and approved Social Media solutions for all programs in relation to promotion and marketing activities;

Using approved news mediums, you will prepare and deliver publicity programs and information materials to increase awareness of Niskamoon Corporation Programs;

Plan, organize and oversee preparation of the publicity events, annual reports, briefs, presentations and press releases as well as initiate and maintain contact with the Media for interviews and news conferences;

Oversee proper promotion and advertising of the TEHQ Program Recruitment Campaign events and activities;

You will also maintain and coordinate administrative procedures to facilitate and expedite processes, develop administrative guidelines for the high school based projects and implement, administer and monitor the high school science projects and student orientation trips as approved by Niskamoon Corporation and in accordance with established policy as well as provide updates and reports;





Make recommendations and assist in implementing and administering the TEHQ program policies and procedures including the Summer Student Employment Program and assist in yearly budget preparation activities in your sector of activity;

You may be asked to train other staff members in his/her area of operations, make appropriate recommendations in his/her area of operations;

May be asked to perform any other related duties and functions

### YOUR PROFILE

You hold a Bachelor's Degree in Administration, Public Administration, Communications, Marketing or other related field or you have training or four (4) years of experience in a relevant field which may compensate for lack in qualifications;

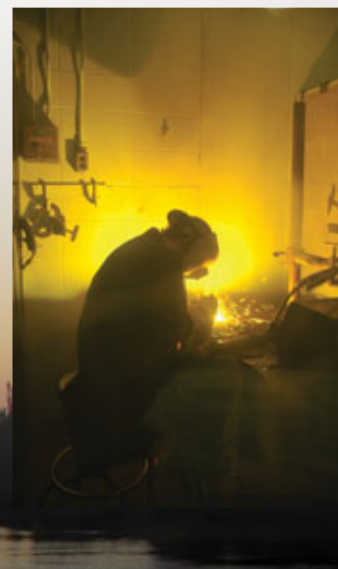
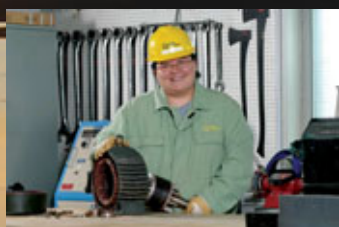
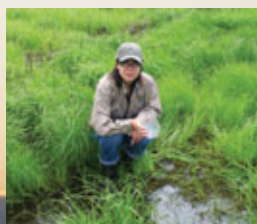
You are fluent in Cree, French and English (mandatory), you have excellent communication and interpersonal skills as important assets;

You also have a written knowledge of English and are Computer literate and knowledgeable of mainstream software (ie. Microsoft Office) is MANDATORY;

Niskamoon Corporation may at its discretion waive any or all of the aforementioned requirements if it finds a suitable candidate who is a beneficiary of the JBNQA and who accepts, as a condition of employment, to follow a training plan determined by Niskamoon Corporation.

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Via email: [gpisimopeo@niskamoon.org](mailto:gpisimopeo@niskamoon.org)  
Via fax: 514-285-1441

**DEADLINE TO APPLY: Friday, February 10, 2012**



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Nemaska, Québec J0Y 3B0  
[www.niskamoon.org](http://www.niskamoon.org)





Frank Polson

## A showcase for the artists of Quebec's 11 Nations

by Justin Giovannetti

The ground-breaking 11 Nations exhibit at Old Montreal's Bonsecours Market was unveiled December 13 to a packed gallery that included luminaries such as NDP MP Romeo Saganash and Quebec Native affairs minister Geoff Kelley.

With 38 pieces hanging in the historic building in the heart of the old city, many artists saw the event as an opportunity to reach large non-Native audiences with the art and stories of Aboriginal communities across Quebec.

"I was trying to break out of the stereotypical Native art," said Sandra Picard, an artist from Kahnawake. "It's more out there. The art is very therapeutic for me. It's about my life, my community and the culture that surrounds me."

Picard chose to tackle one of Kahnawake's political debates with her art: mixed marriages.

"I'm from a mixed marriage, my mother is Mohawk and my dad is Quebecois. This art represents that relationship and how what we are doing today in the community isn't favourable for the generations to come," said Picard, gesturing to a dark piece with several feathers.

"Sometimes we need art to understand the impact of our decisions and how the community is dealing with it," Picard continued.

"What started with my mother is now mine, I'm looking at this situation of mixed marriages and I'm wondering, 'Now what?' And the community is wondering the same thing."



Tim Whiskeychan

Featuring the work of 22 artists, the 11 Nations exhibit was organized in only six weeks, an impressive feat



for a show that brought together artists from isolated communities across the province.

"The effort that was put into assembling the 11 Nations was astounding," said Romeo Saganash, the MP for Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou, who is serving as the exhibit's ambassador.

"I think we've put together an excellent show of our diversity," said Saganash. "Some of the art is very modern, some is more traditional, but it shows a breath of knowledge and allows the public to see the culture of the 11 Nations."

Tim Whiskeychan, a Cree artist from Waskaganish, was one of the lucky artists to exhibit at the show. Saying that he was at "the right place at the right time," Whiskeychan was

"THERE IS A STUPID NOTION THAT NATIVE ART IS STAGNANT, BUT THAT SIMPLY ISN'T TRUE"

showing his art at a gallery in Sept-Îles when he was invited to join the show.

"I had to borrow some originals from the grand chief and ship them down," said Whiskeychan. "Now I just need to get them back safely."

With two very different pieces, one traditional and one contemporary, Whiskeychan's acrylics made heavy use of the goose as a symbol of the Cree.

"These say a lot about where I grew up. Nature is attached with it and culture. I was brought up a nomad and hunted geese. I love the birds, it's a symbol of the Cree," he said. "We get medicine from the geese, and goose grease is good for the gourmet as well."

The breadth of Whiskeychan's style, with bright spots of colour and abstract shapes, is seen as a testament to the resilience of Native culture.

"There is a stupid notion that Native art is stagnant, but that simply isn't true," said Saganash. "This show proves that Native culture is as

diverse and creative as any found in the world."

With two pieces in the show, Kanesatake's Ellen Gabriel was also proud of the great balance of art showcasing Native culture at the show.

"This is a proud moment because this is in a part of Montreal where Aboriginals aren't really recognized," said Gabriel. "This is a statement not just about the artists, but about our culture and what it represents."



Tanya Mesher Jones

photo by Justin Giovanetti



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# Blackstone returns for sophomore season

by Akiva Levitas

Premiering Wednesday, January 11, the second season of the award-winning television series *Blackstone* will be continuing where it left off with last season's cliff-hanger finale on APTN.

The series, which follows the fictitious Blackstone First Nation, is ground breaking because it is told from the First Nations point of view. The issues the show explores take viewers to a dark place, but that realism underscores its messages of hope and reconciliation.

Producer Ron E. Scott has assembled a cast of some of the best talent in the Native community to continue with this ground-breaking series. It's no wonder that *Blackstone* has become one of the most popular shows on APTN and is gaining popularity around the world as far away as New Zealand.

The series airs at 9 pm every Wednesday with a rerun the following Sunday at 11:30 pm.





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About a **hundred contractors** and **more than 20,000 workers** contributed to the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project. Our thanks goes out to each of them.

[hydroquebec.com/rupert/en](http://hydroquebec.com/rupert/en)







## UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

### Happy New (and not the last) Year

by Xavier Kataquapit

**W**e are all looking forward to a new year but many are fearful of the coming of 2012. Some believe the coming year will mark the end of an historic period. Many think that this year will be a spiritually changing one and far too many believe it will herald the end of the world. This idea has been boosted in popular culture through movies, books and websites detailing how and why this year will mark The End.

The apocalypse was a recurring topic of excitement when I was a growing up in a remote Native community on the James Bay coast. It seemed like everyone talked about an end date whenever there were discussions of a significant date or the announcements of a mystic or religious leader. When news spread of the end, everyone lived at a more frenzied pace and more people attended the local church. Those end-time believers' plans were tossed to the wind. What was the use of thinking about the future if the end was coming? There was a general sense of fear and apprehension for the future. I have lived through countless apocalypses at this point. I grew so tired of them by the time I was a teenager that I started wishing for an apocalypse for the apocalypse.

When it comes to the year 2012, many people cite the Mayan long count calendar, a number of years calculated to be a 5,125-year period, according to the Mayan system. This time period actually ends on December 21, 2012 in our modern calendar and it is this date that is falsely pinpointed as the moment at which our world will come to an end.

When Europeans first read about Mayan culture and writing, they did so with a Eurocentric perspective. Some of the strongest of European ideas were based on Christianity and the image of an end of the world and a catastrophic apocalypse. It was with this frame of mind that in the early 1900s a German scholar named Ernst Forstemann interpreted some Mayan writing to describe a catastrophic flood and a "destruction of the world." This scholar made no reference to the Mayan long count calendar, December 21, 2012 or even if the events he described took place in the past or would happen in the future. Succeeding researchers in Mayan culture made reference to his ideas and later attributed the events to the end of the Mayan long count calendar. This was an untruth.

New Age proponents and believers also associate the date with significant astrological alignments and events. In fact the date does not coincide with any unusual alignment of the stars or planets. One of the ideas that circulated is the alignment with sun and the centre of our galaxy at some point in 2012. This idea is mostly discounted by astronomers because of the fact that no one is really sure of where the galactic centre is located due to fact that it is obscured by cosmic dust, debris and millions of bright stars. It is also impossible to determine the exact boundaries of our massive galaxy and to identify how it is oriented – a crucial fact that is necessary to determine where the centre is located.

To further disprove the 2012 end time myth is the fact that the Mayans never made any indication that the world would end at the end of a long count calendar period. They viewed this as merely a changing of the clocks to mark the start of a new period. It was the Mayan form of Y2K for us.

The idea of the end according to the Mayans is also contradicted by the fact that they also referenced dates beyond our time and thousands of years into the future. Why would they talk about the distant future if the end would happen in 2012?

It seems like so many of us are always fascinated and intrigued about an absolute end to everything. Sometimes this obsession is so strong that it seems to drive the world towards a path of negativity. The biggest adrenaline rush ever has to do with so many people being caught up in the doomsday scenario.

We should be more careful of our ideas of an end to our world. If we continue to believe in a doomed end then we can be led to think that terrible events could and should happen to fulfil our beliefs. What would happen if, instead of doomsday, we chose to believe in a better future life of peace and good will?

So, do a little research for yourself on this topic of 2012 and the Mayan calendar and if you ignore the shallow hype and myths you will discover some deeper truth. We will certainly have our challenges this year but it won't be because of some hocus-pocus myth, rather it will have to do with the people who inhabit this beautiful planet. Happy 2012 and may you do your very best to make it the best year ever for you and your loved ones.

# CLASSIFIEDS

## BIRTHDAYS

Wishing the man of our lives a very HAPPY 40th BIRTHDAY to a wonderful husband and father Johnny Salt! Hope you will have a great day with your family, love you my dear! xox-oxoxox From wife Annie, Jaedon, JoAnne & JoAnna.

## ANNIVERSARIES

I want to wish my husband Kirby Blackned a Happy 9th anniversary. With many more anniversaries to come our way! I love you and happy anniversary again. Love your wife, Lena Blackned

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Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared. 514-843-4333.

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(www.kidshelpphone.ca)

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Parent helpline:

1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626

(www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference:

1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline:

1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:

1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec: 1-866-277-3553

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html>

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**Buy a ticket and you'll have a chance to win the beautiful quilt pictured to the right.**

\$5 = 1 ticket

\$10 = 3 tickets

\$20 = 6 tickets

The quilt was made by the Centre's Women's Circle over the course of almost a year! It would be ideal on a single bed or a double if you don't mind that the sides don't hang down much. The quilt was made by ladies with various skill levels so it is not perfect, but it is beautiful, warm, and made with love!

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**Draw: Jan. 18, 2012**

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